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Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note is intended to facilitate deliberations of member States at the current session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in relation to the enhancement of cooperation and policy and programme coordination necessary for the achievement of the new Global Objectives on Forests set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49, and for the implementation of the non-legally-binding instrument on forests, to be negotiated at the current session.

The present note describes a number of activities undertaken since the fifth and sixth sessions of the Forum related to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments. It also highlights future issues of concern and opportunities and seeks to suggest some points for consideration by the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. One of the principal functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the international arrangement on forests is to enhance cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as well as to contribute to synergies among them, including coordination among donors (see Economic and Social Council resolutions 2000/35 and 2006/49).

2. In its resolution 2006/49, the Economic and Social Council devoted one section specifically to the issue of enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination. The resolution contains directives and guidelines for countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant multilateral agreements, instruments, processes and United Nations bodies, aimed at improving implementation of the shared Global Objectives on Forests and more efficient collaboration and cooperation with the Forum and its secretariat.

3. Accordingly, the renewed emphasis on enhanced cooperation will be an important part of the new multi-year programme of work for the Forum if it is to meet the shared Global Objectives on Forests set out in resolution 2006/49 and ensure that forests contribute to the international development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests, to be adopted at the seventh session of the Forum, will depend greatly on strengthened cooperation with existing instruments and processes at the regional and global levels.

4. In its resolution, the Council also called upon members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen their collaboration and coordination in order to foster progress towards sustainable forest management at all levels. Provisions regarding the financial means of implementation will also require more coordination and collaboration among Partnership members with the guidance of the Forum.

5. The present note has three objectives: first, to describe some of the activities undertaken since the fifth and sixth sessions of the Forum related to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments; second, to highlight future issues and opportunities; and finally, to propose some points for consideration by the Forum.

II. System-wide cooperation and policy and programme coordination

A. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly

6. The ongoing reform process of the United Nations aimed at improving system-wide coordination and coherence is expected to have implications for the work of the different bodies and organs of the Organization, including the Forum. Within this process, resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly decided that the Council should hold annual ministerial-level reviews as part of its high-level segment, and requested it to consider launching a development cooperation forum on the implementation of the

internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, during the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2007. These new functions for the Council are of more immediate and direct concern to its functional commissions and the Forum in terms of their provision of inputs to the work of the Council.

7. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015 (E/CN.18/2007/2), those developments provide the Forum with an opportunity to integrate its work more effectively with the broader development agenda, one of the new main functions of the Forum. Greater coordination, cooperation and engagement will be needed between the Forum and the other functional and regional commissions of the Council to further strengthen the contribution of the Forum to the Council's work. Some points for further consideration in this regard are contained in section VIII of the present report.

8. In 2006, the Forum secretariat contributed substantively to the preparation of the high-level segment of the Council on creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development. The Forum secretariat contributed to the drafting of the report of the Secretary-General on that issue by highlighting the interrelationships between sustainable forest management, employment and rural development. The secretariat also contributed to the preparations of the session by working with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others to organize a panel discussion on employment and rural development.

B. Follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration

9. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) continues to provide a solid framework for the work of the United Nations and its Member States. The importance of forests is highlighted in the Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The proportion of land area covered by forest constitutes an indicator (No. 25) for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Goal of ensuring environmental sustainability (No. 7). The Forum secretariat is actively engaged in the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators,[1] an inter-agency effort to monitor and report on progress made, and has collaborated with various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in this respect.

10. Enhancing the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is one of the three new main functions of the Forum agreed in 2006. An agreement on four shared Global Objectives on Forests further defined the priorities for national and global progress. Taken together, the Millennium Development Goals and the Global Objectives on Forests provide the foundation for the work of the Forum, Member States and other international organizations.

[1] For information on the Millennium Development Goal Indicators project, see: http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/.

C. Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and the regional commissions

11. Interaction with other functional commissions and United Nations bodies, including, in particular, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the regional commissions, has been increasingly important to the Forum and its secretariat, and Member States have encouraged greater participation and involvement of regional commissions in the work of the Forum.

12. In December 2005, the Forum secretariat organized an interregional workshop on regional cooperation for integrating forestry into the broader development agenda, involving the secretariats of the regional commissions and other United Nations agencies and organizations, such as FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The main objective of the workshop was to explore the possible collaborative role of regional commissions vis-à-vis the Forum and the regional dimension in the Forum's future work programme. Discussions were held on how to streamline forests into the broader development agenda and means to increase cooperation and coordination between the global and regional levels. Possible tasks and the type of role that regional commissions and other regional bodies or institutions might play in that regard were also explored.

13. The workshop concluded that regional commissions could function as integrating organizations in forest policy issues at the regional level; in order to integrate sustainable forest management in the economic development planning of countries, strategies must be developed by each regional commission; programmes could be developed jointly by FAO and regional commissions (currently the case only in Europe for historical reasons); there was a need to avoid duplication and to integrate and collaborate more closely with implementing agencies, such as FAO, UNEP and others; full participation in the Forum was essential; and it was important to use existing reporting structures to focus on forests and their cross-sectoral links in other development areas, such as that of the Commission for Sustainable Development, in particular the regional implementation reviews.

D. Activities of the Forum secretariat in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

General functions as a division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

14. The Forum secretariat participates actively in the intradepartmental activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The secretariat contributes every year to the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, providing information about policy recommendations from the Forum that are relevant to the themes under consideration by the Council.

Task force on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development

15. The Forum secretariat has actively contributed to the task force on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The task force was established to develop, in collaboration with other

United Nations bodies, a strategic framework for integrating socio-economic issues into conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Since 2005, the Forum secretariat has participated collaboratively in the task force, particularly in discussions concerning natural resources management and forests in conflict and peacebuilding.

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

16. The secretariats of the Forum on Forests and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have maintained a close working relationship. Active participation by the Chairmen of the Bureaus of the two bodies in each other's sessions has greatly enhanced understanding and collaboration between the two Forums. Indigenous peoples' groups play an active part in the multi-stakeholder dialogues of the Forum on Forests. The secretariat of the Forum on Forests contributed directly to the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and is expected to contribute further once the new multi-year programme of work of the Forum is finalized at the current session.

International Year of Forests

17. The International Year of Forests, 2011, declared by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/193, requires a major input from the Forum secretariat, which is acting as the focal point for the coordination of efforts and work related to the implementation of the Year. The International Year of Forests will be an indispensable tool for the advancement of sustainable forest management worldwide by helping to raise more international awareness of the role of forests in all aspects of development. It will be a celebration of our common understanding and concerns about forests and of their importance to our everyday lives.

18. The International Year of Forests will require a strong coordination role by the secretariat in the planning and development of cooperative activities, involving Governments, the member institutions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and various other forest-related international, regional, subregional and national organizations, processes and partnerships. To that end, the incorporation and consideration of the issue in the next multi-year programme of work of the Forum is recommended.

E. Regional cooperation

19. The Forum has increased emphasis on regional cooperation in recent years and the Forum secretariat has in turn pursued closer ties with regional organizations and bodies and, in many of its activities, has drawn upon their knowledge and networks to enhance further collaboration on sustainable forest management.

20. During the plenary meeting of the fifth session of the Forum, a panel discussion on sustainable forest management in the context of Asia-Pacific regional realities was held, closing a series of regional presentations starting in 2003, and demonstrating the importance of integrating subregional and regional experiences into the future work of the Forum.

21. As mentioned in paragraph 12 above, in December 2005 the Forum secretariat organized an interregional workshop on regional cooperation for integrating forestry

into the broader development agenda, involving regional commissions and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The secretariat has addressed several regional commissions with respect to forest-related matters within the context of the Millennium Development Goals and other activities, including natural resource use, governance, renewable energy and sustainable development.

22. During the sixth session of the Forum, three side events on regional issues were held: one organized by the Forum secretariat on the results of the interregional workshop on regional cooperation for integrating forestry into the broader development agenda; one organized by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, with presentations by the Chilean Forest Service, the Campesino Committee of the Highlands and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization on dialogue, synergies and collaboration within and between each group and other groups in the framework of the Puembo II Initiative; and a third organized by the Central Africa Forests Commission on its actions and the more urgent needs of its member countries.

23. In 2006, the Forum secretariat participated in almost all of the FAO Regional Forestry Commission meetings and workshops, at which further consideration was given to the issue of the implementation of the proposals for action and national forest programmes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. All commissions expressed their preference for a strong regional dimension to be developed within the context of the Forum in its future work programme. They also recommended more active cooperation, interaction and dialogue between regional level processes and the Forum, and exploration of how the Committee on Forests could enable FAO and regional forestry commissions to further contribute to and inform the Forum of regional priorities.

III. International instruments and organizations relevant to the forest sector

Coordination with conventions related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Convention on Biological Diversity

24. At the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006, several decisions were made to give more direction to the expanded programme of work on forests and new targets for implementation, including targets for protected areas, vulnerable areas, conservation of genetic diversity and traditional forest-related knowledge, the impact of international trade, and adaptation to climate change. The Parties also expressed their appreciation for ongoing collaboration and efforts at harmonization of reporting. The Forum secretariat participated in the meeting of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation, at which a number of issues were explored, including development of a clearing house mechanism; linking cooperation to policy development; the challenges of valuation of biodiversity; the importance of clear needs assessments; and strengthening domestic research and development.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

25. At the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2005, the Parties recognized the importance of sustainable forest management in preventing desertification and encouraged countries to promote sustainable forest management as an effective means of meeting the objective of that and other conventions. The secretariat of the Convention was furthermore encouraged to continue participating in Forum sessions and to work towards the development of other joint initiatives with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

26. At the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change, held in conjunction with the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, several Parties, including Bolivia, Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea introduced a proposal to create incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation. The proposal sought to expand the incentives currently provided for afforestation and reforestation activities under the clean development mechanism to include financial incentives for sustainable forest management and reduced deforestation. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice has set a two-year time frame to further elaborate the proposal. The results of this process will be discussed at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Asia, at the same time as the fourth assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the close of the two-year dialogue on future commitments.

27. To provide an opportunity for more detailed discussion, the Convention secretariat held a workshop on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries, in which the Forum secretariat, as well as a number of other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, participated; a second such workshop will be held in March 2007.

28. The discussions of the underlying causes of deforestation and policy measures to prevent deforestation taken in this context form a strong link between the work of the Convention secretariat and the primary work of the Forum. Ways to enhance and strengthen this synergy should be further explored by the Forum.

IV. Cooperation with relevant international organizations related to forests

A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests

29. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests has played an important role in international arrangements on forests by providing substantive support to the work of the Forum on Forests and by enhancing cooperation and coordination among the members of the Partnership, including through joint forest-related initiatives. Partnership members undertook a number of new initiatives in 2006, including a science and technology initiative aimed at providing policy-relevant scientific findings to international forums.

30. As a voluntary arrangement, the Partnership receives guidance from the Forum, but each member takes direction from, and is accountable to, its own governing body. Many of the governing bodies of the members of the Partnership are calling for greater cooperation with the Forum. The report on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2007 (E/CN.18/2007/6) contains an assessment of the progress of the Partnership, highlighting joint initiatives of Partnership members and describing other collaborative activities undertaken to promote sustainable forest management worldwide.

31. Many of the governing bodies of Partnership members recognized the Global Objectives on Forests adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2006/49 and encouraged secretariats to continue to play an active role in the Partnership. Areas in which organizations are encouraged to continue work include harmonization of reporting, sharing of information and the promotion of sustainable forest management at the regional and national levels.

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

32. The close collaboration with FAO and its regional forestry commissions assures an important link between intergovernmentally agreed decisions and their implementation at the national and regional levels, and contributes to monitoring, reporting and assessment of progress made. At its one hundred and thirty-first session, held in Rome in 2006, the FAO Council recommended that FAO continue to work closely with the Forum secretariat and other Partnership members, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/193, to ensure successful implementation of the International Year of Forests. The Forum secretariat is actively engaged with the work of the FAO Forestry Department and FAO regional forestry commissions, seeing this collaboration as important to ensuring that the intergovernmental decisions of the Forum reach the policymakers and practitioners that can effect change on the ground. The Forum secretariat also participated in the Kotka V Expert Consultation in Finland (12-16 June 2006), which provided guidance to FAO for the preparation of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010.

C. International Tropical Timber Organization

33. The new International Tropical Timber Agreement was adopted in 2006 and is scheduled to come into force by 2008. As with previous agreements, the new agreement was negotiated as a commodity agreement under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and is legally binding. The new agreement will have a longer duration than previous agreements (initially 10 years), which will ensure greater stability and continuity. It retains the balance of emphasis between development and conservation of the environment, but broadens the scope to include priority and emerging issues, such as forest law enforcement, illegal logging and associated trade, poverty alleviation, certification, non-timber forest products, environmental services and forest-dependent indigenous and local communities. The Forum secretariat is actively engaged with the work of the International Tropical Timber Organization.

D. International Union of Forest Research Organizations

34. The Forum secretariat has been actively involved with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations in exploring how the provision of scientific knowledge and advice can be further enhanced in the future at the international level in order to facilitate informed decision-making and contribute to policy implementation. In 2006, the Union, in collaboration with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, spearheaded a science and technology initiative as a means of providing policy-relevant scientific knowledge to intergovernmental processes on issues of specific importance to them. The Global Forest Information Service serves as an Internet gateway that provides access to forest data from around the world, and includes browsing and metadata search facilities for users, building on agreements with a broad range of forest-related institutions, giving them broader opportunities to disseminate information. In leading the initiative, the Union maintains close collaboration with the Forum secretariat and other partners. The Forum secretariat is a member of the steering committees of both the science and technology initiative and the Information Service.

E. United Nations Environment Programme

35. The Forum secretariat has worked closely with UNEP and partner organizations in the preparation of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4), which will be published in 2007. The GEO series reviews the world environment situation and provides early warning on emerging environmental issues of international significance. The Forum secretariat contributed to the writing of chapter 3, on land, particularly the sections on forests and land use. It also participates as a member of the GEO-4 High-level Consultative Group, which provides UNEP with strategic advice on collaborative aspects of the GEO-4 process, including outreach and strategic engagement, as well as on the preparation of a summary for decision makers. UNEP also has launched its major worldwide "Billion Tree campaign", which has the objective of planting at least 1 billion trees in 2007.

V. Stakeholder involvement

36. Stakeholder participation in the Forum on Forests process continues to be of importance. Regular consultations with focal points of major groups were organized by the Forum secretariat throughout 2005 and 2006 and in preparation for the current session. Representatives of major groups presented their perspectives at a panel discussion entitled "Contributions of civil society to sustainable forest management: from policy development to implementation" at the sixth session of the Forum. The representatives also contributed substantively to the ad hoc expert group on the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests in December 2006 and the country-led initiative in Indonesia in February 2007 on the multi-year programme of work of the Forum. Major groups are submitting discussion papers reflecting their views and concerns for the current session. The papers are issued as addenda to the note by the Secretariat on multi-stakeholder dialogue (E/CN.18/2007/4). There is also a growing spirit of collaboration and partnership

among the different groups, as major group organizations continue to seek ways of leveraging each other's strengths and constituencies.

VI. Country- and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum

37. Country- and organization-led initiatives have been recognized as an essential part of the work of the Forum. Linked to different themes of the Forum's multi-year programme of work, the initiatives have provided a number of opportunities for experts to address issues prior to Forum sessions. The diversification of workshops and expert meetings in various regions worldwide has also played a significant role in raising awareness of the work of the Forum, promoting increased understanding of the issues and facilitating discussions. The Forum secretariat has provided input and advice to all initiatives held in support of the Forum. The initiatives have provided valuable expert input to the work of the Forum, with reports made available for consideration at the Forum sessions.

38. One recent example was an international expert meeting organized in support of the Forum, entitled "Scoping for a future agreement on forests", held in Berlin in November 2005. The aim of the meeting was to lay the basis for informed decisions at the sixth session of the Forum, and provided an opportunity to further explore some of the concepts and ideas contained in the Chairman's draft text that was the result of the fifth session of the Forum.

39. In February 2007, a specific country-led initiative is being held on the next multi-year programme of work of the Forum until 2015 in Indonesia, providing an opportunity to countries to exchange views and initiate informal discussions on the issue before the session of the Forum.

VII. Advances in forest partnerships and processes

40. A number of regional and international processes have been developed on different themes of sustainable forest management, reflecting particular priorities in specific regions. The developments in relation to criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and on forest law enforcement, governance and illegal international trade have shown how it is possible to establish networking and partnerships within regions, and between processes, in order to benefit from experiences in different parts of the world. The Forum secretariat has been supportive and actively liaising with these and other partnerships, including the Asia Forest Partnership, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, a number of forest law enforcement and governance processes, the International Model Forest Network, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the Montreal Process, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Tehran Process on low forest cover countries, and other regional criteria and indicators-related processes. Some of the cooperation initiatives of these partnerships and processes are briefly described below.

A. Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

41. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe has consistently referred to the advances and benefits of more effective cooperation and coordination with various organizations in implementing subprogrammes in the region. Enhanced cooperation within the Conference has also facilitated interaction and the exchange of information on the developments in discussions on, for example, wood energy and climate change.

42. The Forum secretariat actively engages with the Conference. It is expected that such interaction will increase as a result of the new provisions set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49 on cooperation in the implementation of sustainable forest management at the regional level. Regional cooperation and how the Conference can best contribute to the promotion of regional implementation of global agreements have been central issues in Conference deliberations.

B. Asia Forest Partnership

43. In 2005, the Asia Forest Partnership, of which the Forum secretariat is a founding member, decided to establish a steering committee to replace the former system of lead partners, to be composed of representatives of Japan, Indonesia, the Centre for International Forestry Research, the Nature Conservancy and the Forum secretariat. The Partnership is in the process of evaluating its achievement in the five-year period since its inception in 2002. The Forum secretariat is also involved in the evaluation process. Interaction between the Partnership and the Forum has been growing and, with the new paths opened up by Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49 on the need to strengthen regional cooperation for the implementation of sustainable forest management and the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests, it is anticipated that the Partnership will play an increasing role in the achievement of internationally agreed decisions.

C. Congo Basin Forest Partnership

44. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership was established in 2002 to promote economic development, alleviate poverty, improve governance and enhance the conservation of natural resources in the region. Since its founding, other Governments and non-governmental organizations have joined the partnership, the main objectives of which are to improve communication among its members and support coordination between members' projects, programmes, and policies. In 2006, the Partnership issued *The Forests of the Congo Basin: State of the Forest 2006*, presenting the "baseline" state of the region and intended to serve as a coordination instrument for the Partnership. The Forum secretariat has been actively participating in the work of the Partnership.

D. International Model Forest Network

45. Building on the recommendations of the global forum of the International Model Forest Network in 2005 and the work initiated in the Regional Model Forest Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Model Forest

Network has launched a global consultation for the development of a Network-wide framework of principles, attributes and indicators, upon which the network will define standards for membership and assess compliance with criteria. A globally agreed framework is expected to be finalized in 2007. The Network is also developing a strategic plan for the Regional Model Forest Network for Asia, and a final consultation to complete the strategy has been scheduled for January 2007 in Bangkok. The FAO regional office for Asia and the Pacific has been helping with the initiative, and a regional trend analysis of sustainable forest management in Asia will be used in the upcoming FAO report on the state of forestry in Asia-Pacific.

E. Processes in forest law enforcement, governance and illegal international trade

46. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development includes a commitment to "take immediate action on domestic forest law enforcement and illegal international trade in forest products, including in forest biological resources, with the support of the international community, and provide human and institutional capacity-building related to the enforcement of national legislation in those areas". Several internationally and regionally driven processes address forest law enforcement, governance and associated trade in the forest sector, and the Forum secretariat continues to be actively involved with those partnerships and processes.

47. The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance initiative, facilitated by the World Bank and other international organizations, donor agencies and Governments, continues to make progress. The East Asian process of the initiative held a series of regional workshops and meetings on such issues as customs enforcement, forest sector transparency, and approaches to anti-money-laundering and related investigation and prosecution. In March 2006, the Asia process held a second working group meeting of the Asia task force and advisory group, at which there was a clear indication of a deeper ownership of the process in East Asia and the Pacific. An agreement was also reached to form a regional steering committee with the responsibility of preparing the next ministerial meeting.

48. The members of the Central Africa Forests Commission are working on national action plans to integrate issues of the initiative into the Commission's work programme.

49. The Europe and North America process of the initiative held a ministerial meeting in November 2005 in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. The resulting St. Petersburg Declaration, which has since been adopted by all members of the Council of the European Union, charts a course of action at the national and international levels, and addresses the need for reform of forest sector legislation and policies to ensure that forests are managed in a sustainable manner, responsible legal forest industry is encouraged and the rural poor are not criminalized for using forest resources. A Europe and North America workshop was held in Turkey in May 2006 to discuss further the implementation of the agreements contained in the St. Petersburg Declaration.

50. Forest law enforcement and governance issues have long been addressed by the Forum and remain a priority in its political agenda, culminating in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49, in which the Council urged countries to

develop and implement national plans, programmes and strategies in order to achieve the Global Objectives on Forests and to promote sustainable forest management by, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of countries to address illegal practices according to national legislation and illegal international trade in forest products in the forest sector, through the promotion of forest law enforcement and governance at the national and subnational and regional and subregional levels, as appropriate.

F. Tehran Process

51. A strategic plan of action for the Tehran Process is currently being developed by the secretariat of the Low Forest Cover Countries to strengthen the capacity of member countries and to promote the inclusion of forestry and forest-related issues in national development agendas.

G. Criteria and indicators processes

52. At present, the main international criteria and indicators processes, led by the African Timber Organization, the Dry Forest Asia Initiative, the Dry-Zone Africa Process, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Lepaterique Process, the Montreal Process, the Near East Process, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the Tarapoto Proposal, involve 149 countries and cover 85 per cent of the world's forests. These processes have played a major role in the development of a common understanding of what constitutes sustainable forest management, and collaboration among them is growing. The Inter-Criteria and Indicators Process Collaboration Workshop is a recent initiative of the collaborative effort by the Montreal Process, the International Tropical Timber Organization, FAO, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe and the United States Forest Service. The workshop was held in June 2006 in Poland, in response to repeated calls by international expert conferences on criteria and indicators for more and improved cooperation among the processes.

H. Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration

53. The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, launched in March 2003, currently comprises 25 partners and sponsors, including nine members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, several Governments and governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, communities and a growing number of companies. The Forum secretariat joined the Partnership at its inception. In 2006, the World Conservation Union and the International Tropical Timber Organization collaborated to organize nine national technical workshops in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Mexico, Myanmar and the Philippines.

I. Central Africa (Forests Commission)

54. The Central Africa Forests Commission seeks to facilitate better management and conservation of forests in Central African countries. It received its mandate

from the Heads of State of the subregion to coordinate all activities and policies regarding the management of forests and savannahs. The treaty of the Commission was adopted by the Heads of State of Central Africa during the Brazzaville Summit in February 2005. The Forum secretariat works closely with the Commission secretariat to facilitate the exchange of information, including through its participation in meetings and events.

VIII. Issues for further consideration

55. The new working modalities of the United Nations Forum on Forests as well as the changing modalities of the work of the Economic and Social Council will require more interaction and sharing of perspectives with forest-related regional and subregional bodies, mechanisms, processes and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in the work of the Forum.

56. Countries may wish to consider how the Forum can best contribute to the annual ministerial reviews and biennial development cooperation forums of the Council within the context of the multi-year programme of work.

57. Countries may also wish to consider incorporating activities related to the International Year of Forests into the new multi-year programme of work.

58. In addressing the linkages of the work of the Forum with that of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, countries may wish to consider ways to enhance and strengthen synergies and linkages.

59. In addressing linkages at the regional and subregional levels, countries may wish to request the Secretary-General:

(a) To continually address the relationship between forests and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, at relevant regional meetings, including regional implementation meetings, within the context of sustainable economic, social and environmental development;

(b) To facilitate the incorporation of forest-related issues more effectively as part of the work of regional commissions, and enable closer collaboration and work with other international regional agencies and processes, such as regional treaty bodies, the FAO regional forestry commissions and regional development banks.

60. When further defining the regional component of its work, the Forum may wish to request the Secretary-General to prepare, in collaboration with regional partners, a report for the eighth session on how to render more efficient and effective the collaboration among existing regional partnerships, regional processes and organizations.

61. Countries may wish to consider possible tangible provisions to explore how best to strengthen forest education and research and development in the context of the new multi-year programme of work of the Forum.

62. Taking into account Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49, the Forum may wish to provide further guidance and request the Secretary-General:

(a) To facilitate the implementation of the proposals of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests for action, by initiating a project, as an activity of the multi-year programme of work of the

Forum, in collaboration with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, for clustering and further simplifying language, taking into account existing work;

(b) To establish a close linkage between the Forum secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other global and regional stakeholders, to strengthen forest education and research and development through global, regional and subregional networks;

(c) To build upon and enhance, in collaboration with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, activities to promote the exchange of forest-management-related experiences and good practices.

63. The Forum may wish to provide further guidance to the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests by requesting it:

(a) To mainstream the decisions taken by the Forum into the programmes and financial mechanisms of its member organizations, particularly by increasing support for national forest programmes and actions aimed at the implementation of sustainable forest management and the integration of forest issues into national development programmes and poverty reduction strategies;

(b) To coordinate the development of indicators for assessing and monitoring the fourth Global Objective on Forests on finance;

(c) To provide further support to the Forum secretariat on assessing the relative ability of different financial means of implementation, including innovative financial mechanisms, to ensure sustainable forest management.